



The Man from Pakistan: The True Story of the World's Most Dangerous Nuclear Smuggler by Douglas Frantz and Catherine Collins

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The Tarai region of Nepal has assumed importance in Nepalese politics. The author analyses the diversity in the Tarai at stance length. Four geographical regions are recognized in Nepal. These are Himal or the high mountain region; Pahad or the middle mountain region; Tarai (or Madhes), the plains region; and the Bhitri Tarai or the inner Tarai. Madhes and Tarai are taken to be synonymous. The Tarai region is inhabited by four groups of people – indigenous people such as the Tharus who refuse to call themselves Madhesi, the Hindu caste groups who have been living there for centuries, the migrants from the Hill districts, and the migrants from India. Due to high level of migration over long periods, the Tarai region has become highly diverse ethnically and linguistically.

The Tarai region can be divided into three distinct regions geographically – the eastern Tarai consisting of the districts from Jhapa to Parsa; central Tarai consisting of Nawalparsai, Rupandehi, and Kapilbastu; and western Tarai from Banke to Kanchanpur. The inner Tarai consists of the districts of Dang and Chitwan, which break the geographical continuity of the Tarai region. The discrimination suffered by the people of the Tarai region for long periods in the hands of the mountain people has led to the demand for autonomy in Madhes. But not every group identifies with the Madhesi agitation. The 2007 Madhesi agitation was led mostly by Bhojpuri and Maithili speaking Madhesi and did not include Tharus or the Muslims who are agitating for their own causes.

The author's analysis shows that no matter how the new federal units are constructed in Nepal, each unit will have a multi-caste, multi-lingual character. Due to the long periods of migration, there has been significant dispersal of the various castes and ethnic groups. The federal units of the future will have significant minorities. The challenge before Nepal is to ensure that there is significant devolution and decentralization of power to the federal units. Each federal unit will need to have to ensure and protect the rights of the minorities. Ethnicity or language alone cannot be the sole basis of federalism in Nepal. Professor Pitamber Sharma's comprehensive yet concise account of ethnic and caste diversity in Nepal is a useful contribution to the ongoing debate over federalism in Nepal.

*The reviewer holds the Lal Bahadur Shastri Chair at IDSA, New Delhi. The views expressed here are his own.

Douglas Frantz and Catherine Collins, *The Man from Pakistan: The True Story of the World's Most Dangerous Nuclear Smuggler*, Twelve, New York, 2008, pp. 448, Rs. 595, ISBN 0-446-19958-3

Reshmi Kazi*

Journalist duo Douglas Frantz and Catherine Collins' book *The Man from Pakistan: The True Story of the World's Most Dangerous Nuclear Smuggler* depicts a strange odyssey of how simple it is for a politically unstable country to acquire nuclear weapons capable of annihilating thousands of innocent non-combatants. The book also makes disturbing revelations on the White House's policies that consistently and consciously ignored widespread nuclear proliferation for the sake of 'higher' political interests. The volume is a disquieting exposé on how American policy makers concentrated more on mollifying Pakistan at the cost of Islamabad's proliferation linkages with Iran and Libya.

The Man from Pakistan is the history of nuclear proliferation under the tutelage of Abdul Qadeer Khan, popularly regarded as the 'father of the Islamic bomb' in Pakistan. The book chronicles the development of Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme over a span of four decades 1970s–2000s. It accounts how Khan stole nuclear secrets and blueprints from the Dutch laboratory Urenco between 1972 and 1975. The authors reveal how Khan, in the aftermath of India's 1974 test, convinced the Pakistan political leadership to provide him an opportunity to enrich uranium to fuel the country's nuclear weapons programme. Thereafter, Khan spearheaded an international nuclear black market network to sell sensitive nuclear technologies to Libya, Iran, and North Korea. Finally, the book records the downfall of Abdul Qadeer Khan after the revelation of incontrovertible evidence provided by Libya that he had aided Tripoli's nuclear weapons programme. Much of this information is already in the public domain. The volume is distinguished by some new revelations. Frantz and Collins account how Khan conspired with the then Vice Chief of the Army, General Mirza Aslam Beg, to overthrow Benazir Bhutto. 'Beg agreed that Bhutto was an obstruction and confided to Khan that he, too, wanted to get rid of her' (p. 182). Bhutto had conflicting relations with Khan and was suspicious of his nuclear ambitions which as the authors claim were a foremost reason for her ouster from office. 'Bhutto herself later maintained that her opposition to going nuclear was one of the reasons she was later ousted from office' (p. 171).

Other interesting revelations made by the authors are the questionable relationship that Abdul Qadeer Khan had with the UK businessman, Peter Griffin. The authors have provided minute details of Griffin's fierce efforts to fight media allegations made by the BBC and the *Guardian* for abetment of clandestine nuclear programmes. But perhaps the most attention-grabbing claim that the authors have emphasized is the United States' failure to respond to the Abdul Qadeer Khan challenge despite credible evidence. The authors argue that the United States could have stopped Khan as early as 1975 when he was on the radar for the first time for stealing nuclear secrets. The United States' timely action would have perhaps foiled Pakistan's attempts to have an operational nuclear arsenal. However, for the next four decades the United States sat back and watched Abdul Qadeer Khan indulging in nuclear proliferation. This frightening aspect of the book has made *The New York Post* call this volume 'Chilling . . . required reading'.

Although the US administration turned a blind eye to the clandestine nuclear dealings of Pakistan, there were some virulent forces working within the United States that sought to quell Khan's black market network. Richard Barlow, a former CIA and Department of Defense analyst, contradicted a US official in 1987 during a congressional briefing by declaring that there were 'scores' (p. 145) of instances where Pakistani agents attempted to indulge in illegal transactions for nuclear wares with the United States on behalf of the Pakistani government. The authors contend Barlow was 'shaken by the lies told to Congress' (p. 166) by the US government: 'The Pentagon bosses who had cooked the intelligence to support the administration's policy then decided they had to get rid of him. In fact, they decided to destroy him' (p. 173).

The authors' focus on Iran is another aspect that interests this reader. There is little doubt that Iran is steadily progressing towards attaining nuclear weaponry. Teheran has made substantial advancement in the development of P-2 centrifuges that is believed to accelerate Iran's nuclear weapons programme. Iran's P-2 centrifuge highlights the assistance provided by Khan in clear defiance of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). To this extent the authors, while respecting the work of the IAEA, have focused on the weakness of the IAEA. The authors have pointed out the inability

of the IAEA to build its own intelligence-gathering system. The authors have criticized the excessive reliance of the IAEA on the Western intelligence authorities, which has proved dangerous, as evident in the case of Abdul Qadeer Khan. It appears quite inconceivable that the IAEA could satisfactorily deal with the Khan case, especially when it has failed to stop Iran's violations of its commitment to the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The authors competently demonstrate that the United States failed in preventing Abdul Qadeer Khan from clandestinely proliferating nuclear technology to the Middle East and North Korea. However, the authors have not done justice on the issue of the US administration conspiring to divert public attention and stop proliferation. This aspect perhaps needed more attention than has been accorded by the authors. The authors have asserted that coordinated international cooperation could have prevented the proliferation of Khan's network in the 1990s. However, the book throughout has strongly emphasized exclusively Washington's role in dealing with the challenge. The authors have also failed to address the issue of whether cutting economic assistance to Pakistan would curb the country's nuclear weapons activities. What would have been the consequences of such action for the war on Afghanistan? In dealing with proliferation activities, the authors have also been unjust in blaming the George Bush administration and overlooking the role of Bill Clinton in the case of North Korea.

Despite the above drawbacks, the volume presents an ocean of important information. Most importantly, the primary sources of this book are based on many interviews with people who have credible and authentic knowledge on the issue. The factual material is further augmented with several confidential documents from government authorities. The book has highlighted the United States' inability to exercise leverage on Pakistan as it did in the case of Taiwan and South Korea. Ironically, Abdul Qadeer Khan's fingerprints are evident on all the existential nuclear dangers of the world. This is a call which the international community has to take for the sake of mankind.

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